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Santulli '96

#30, Blurb-a-thon.

BLURB-A-THON
EDITOR'S BLURB by Joe Santulli

The temptation has always been there. If you've been reading us for awhile,
you probably wondered how I was ever able to keep this little "blurb", the stuff
that's on my mind, limited to just one little block of each issue. Well not this time,
my fine friends! AND, I've asked my crew to join me in speaking their minds in
much the same fashion. So you'll see less "regular stuff" this issue, and more
blurbing. Maybe you'll like it, maybe you won't. The truth is, it's been SO busy
here getting the latest edition of the Guide out the door that we really didn't have
time to work around a specific theme, which is always very challenging. So we
each sat in front of our PC's and blurbed away, and this is the result.

Of course, not everybody follows the rules (Oleniacz!), and in some cases they
just don't apply (Al had some good stuff we couldn't leave out), so once again, the
theme is merely a "motif", surrounding the rest of an otherwise regular wrap up of
DP research. Hope you enjoy it.

Oh - before I forget, I've added a new writer whom many of you probably know.
His name is Tony Bueno, and I asked him to join us for several reasons. For one,
he's a very prolific writer. In less than a month I received about twenty pages
worth of material from him, including reason number two, the Mr. Do! FAQ
(Frequently Answered Questions if you haven't been hanging around with com-
puter people recently). I love FAQ's... they dig so much deeper into the subject
than any one person cares to know, but they're really interesting if they're done
well. Tony's is done very well. I have to say I was never a great Mr. Do! fan - I
enjoy the games but never obsessed over them - but after reading through I had
to break out the ColecoVision version and play again, only to be greatly surprised
by how much I really DO like Do!

We also have a new PC here at DP HQ, which includes loads more hard drive
space, a full page scanner, and a laser printer. No more of those crappy screen
shots. What you should see in graphic quality is an improvement greater than
any other we've made over the years. Tell me what you think! I shelled out some
big bucks for this baby and Digital Press was a big part of the reason.

The DP Guide was an even bigger part. It's finally here, and will be shipping by
the end of the month. If you want a copy, check out the big AD! We spent some
interesting months finalizing the new edition, centering on whether or not to keep
the prices in or not. After hearing so many of you ask us to trade in the prices for
collectibility ratings, it was done - and then we started to think about putting it
back again. It never made it back, but if the public demand is great enough, we
can always revise it again!

On The Cover
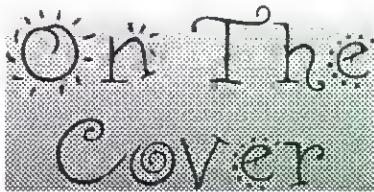
Lots to Say About Nothing
by Joe Santulli

We all have our opinions about
gaming. Some of us are more
vocal than others, and some of us
don't want to be represented by
those vocal people. In this issue
we're all going to have some pretty
strong opinions. Care to dis-
agree? We'd love to hear your
side.

The truth is out there.

DP Classic Videogames' Collector's Guide 4th Edition

Now available.

WHAT'S THERE:

Over 200 pages of listings and information for all of our favorite cartridge-based systems, long forgotten by contemporary publications but long-cherished by gamers: Atari 2600, 5200 and 7800, Intellivision, ColecoVision, and AdventureVision. Arcadia 2001, Astrocade, Vectrex, Studio II, Odyssey II, Sega Master System and Turbografx-16.

WHAT'S NEW:

- ✓ 3.01 thru 3.07 additions are included here, "Addendums" as printed in Digital Press.
- ✓ Brand new Collector's Connection, over twice the size of the last Guide.
- ✓ Hundreds of product additions, corrections, and updates.
- ✓ New section for AdventureVision.
- ✓ New section for RCA Studio II.
- ✓ New section for Sega Master System.
- ✓ New section for Turbografx-16 and PC Engine.
- ✓ Trivia section.
- ✓ Copyright dates have been added in some areas to help chronology buffs.
- ☺ PsychOphile entries provide the editor's capsulized views on hundreds of games.
- 📖 Magazine ratings of the games have been included where applicable.
- ❷ The scarceOmeter replaces the old dollar-value system, which was impossible to maintain.
- ⌂ Editor's choice indicators for game players: editor's favorites!
- ☹ Un-smiley faces indicate non-entertaining titles: editor's choice: don't get on my case!

WHERE TO GET IT:

Only here. Send us $15, made out to Joe Santulli. They start shipping on June 30th. Don't be the last on your block to have one. You know where we are.

OK. Now for something completely different.

I was playing **Mountain Madness: Super Pro Skiing** on the Intellivision the other day, and had almost forgotten that this game includes a course generator. They call it a helicopter drop, and the courses can be really tricky because the computer only cares that there is a small path on some horizontal axis for the player to pass through. This is a terrific feature, something I just can't understand the lack thereof in today's gaming. It's something called "random".

"Random" is incorporated into most games, but not in the way most gamers would like it to be. Sure, random encounters happen in RPG's, enemies randomly fire at you in shooters, computer controlled fighters randomly select a move to pull... but it just isn't enough. Here's what I consider using the "random" feature effectively:

1) Racing games, like **Super Pro Skiing**, should have random course generators. One of the greatest criticisms of these games is the lack of tracks. Well, you only really NEED one track. Then you NEED to have new ones created on the fly. If all of the objects on the course are 3D rendered and pre-defined, then why can't they appear in random locations?

2) RPG's need more random quests. I remember a game called **Adventure Construction Kit** by Electronic Arts for the C-64, which allowed you to take all of the elements in an adventure, and scramble them so their appearance is totally randomized. Then it generated dungeons and set you off on your way. Even Atari's primitive **Adventure** for the VCS had this feature, in the spectacular variation #3. The A.I. in both of these games sucked big-time, because you could either find that super-weapon right at your feet in the beginning of a game or trapped behind a wall and impossible to reach in another. A.I. techniques have improved over the years (I hope), so this shouldn't be a problem.

3) You might think fighting games are immune to this criticism, but they're not. Far too many fighters end up being predictable, with expected results, glitches, and patterns that a good player can pick up. I want the element that I'm playing against a human when I'm simulating fighting a human. None of this aggressive press, press, press stuff that the computer is always doing. I want to be "surprised" by a computer's tactics. I know what a programmer would say here: "If I throw in some surprising tactics, you'll eventually learn the surprising tactics and those won't seem surprising anymore". Lazy f#%!ing programmer. What you do is throw them in and then randomize them. The computer should back off every once in awhile, jump for no apparent reason, throw punches at thin air, and any combination therein. But the computer should also "appear" to be backing off, then come in all aggressive-like. I guess what I'm saying is that if there are enough random experiences you shouldn't be able to pick out the pattern, and I know that can be done.

I hope to see more of this in the future, because I'm pretty damn sick and tired of all the patterns necessary to beat video games. I want a challenge, not a memory exercise. I got enough of that in history class back in school.

★★★

If you're a collector like I am (or just an insanely fanatical gamer who needs to play everything there is - that could be

me, too... hmm) you have to be thrilled with the fact that some of the 16-bit systems are closing shop. Yeah, it's pretty miserable for owners of the Sega CD who don't feel like they got their money's worth, or Genesis owners who don't want to upgrade just yet... but on the other hand, has there ever been a better time to get loads of cheap games? Sega CD's are going for as little as $9.98 at Toys 'R Us, and many, many more going at $19.98. This will probably be as low as you'll see them drop. Used Genesis games can be found just about anywhere these days, and I've really been able to build up my collection and play some great games that I passed on at $59 but are a "must" at $14.95. Electronics Boutique and Walden Soft are really great places to check out for used stuff, in some cases even better than FuncoLand. Funco is better for Nintendo 8-bit games, but I'm starting to see attrition on those shelves, as they're not being filled (I guess the owners willing to sell their old NES games have finally tapped out, at least around here).

Still, it is a wonderful time to be a gamer - especially a collector/gamer!

★★★

I think I've figured out why the mysteriously titled Sega Saturn game **Panzer Dragoon** and **Panzer Dragoon Zwei 2** mean. Does anyone remember the Sega Genesis game **Alisia Dragoon**? In that game, you play this sort of combination sorceress/warrior woman who "commands" several beasts, one of which I guess could be called a dragon. I have to check the manual to see the underlying story to **Alisia Dragoon**, but even without it, I imagine a "dragoon" is a title much like "mage" or "priestess" would be in this fantasy era. In fact, I will go as far as to say that a "dragoon" is a sorcerer/warrior who has command over the beasts. A beast-master if you will! And I'll also state boldly that Alisia IS one of these clever characters. Since the guy that rides the dragon in the Saturn game seems to have similar talents (although he uses a gun instead of magic), I believe he is a "dragoon" as well. So there you have it. His name is Panzer. And that's all I'll ever say about it ever again. Thank you.

★★★

I know I'm not the first person to find a video game soundtrack so awesome that I have to have it on CD. **Final Fantasy III** was the first for me - I still listen to certain tracks from the three CD set from time to time. I LOVE the **Tempest 2000** soundtrack from the Jaguar cartridge, but for some reason the CD lacks the "oomph". Why they decided to remix that music is beyond me. You don't mess with perfection. Another favorite of mine is the Jaguar **Doom** soundtrack. The songs only play in-between levels, not during play. But MAN - are they great! I recorded them all to a cassette and travel with it every day. The **Doom** soundtrack reminds me of James Bond music, it's very upbeat and has a serious sense of urgency. Er, I probably shouldn't listen to that while I'm driving, now that I think about it...

★★★

Racing games fall into the top three video game genres for me (with sports games and shootem' ups in the other two slots), but there is one thing that perpetually ruins these games for me. How often has this happened to you: you're in first

place, seemingly by a mile since you passed the number two guy way back there and haven't had a bad lap since. Suddenly, you fuck up. Just a little bit, maybe you ran your tires into a curb or something. Just as you're picking up speed again, "number two" dashes by, followed by numbers three through however many it takes to get your jaw back into place. What the hell...? Why is it that in one split second every car on the track gets to pass you up? I know auto racing is a game of seconds and all, but really - there should be better AI for those cars that are behind you. Surely some of them got their tires caught up on that curb as well. And don't fatal crashes EVER happen? Why is it that my car suffers the "realism" of damage when I drive poorly, but the computer cars never seem to suffer this affliction? When was the last time you saw a computer controlled vehicle entering a pit-stop? Do they even have pit-stops?

Let me just say that I have played a few games that make great strides in computer AI on racing games, the best of which so far is Psygnosis' **Destruction Derby**. In **DD**, not only do other cars suffer damage inflicted by your car, but you can sit back sometimes and watch them do it to each other. Cars on the other side of the track drop out of the race - I like that. There are very few others that reach this level of realism. Probably the worst offender of all is the **Virtua Racing** series of games. In each one I have never seen a computer car spin out, flip over, run into the walls, or take a pit stop. And if you slow down too much to take a sharp turn, three or four cars will probably pass you up. So what **Virtua** has in terms of a race car "feel", it surely loses in competitive realism. I hope more games use computer AI like **Destruction Derby** does, although it doesn't always have to be as brutal.

<center>★★★</center>

I was recently informed that my brother-in-law Garry just bought a Playstation, after a few hours with **Destruction Derby** and **PGA Tour**. We had a blast at the in-laws over the holidays, it's amazing how quickly an interactive system can replace television. Anyway, Garry, this is for you, because the cost of the stamp is cheaper than the phone call!

SO YOU JUST BOUGHT YOURSELF A PLAYSTATION. WHAT'S NEXT?
I feel fairly confident that you picked up **PGA Tour** and **Destruction Derby**, since those are the games that sold you on the machine. You're probably sitting there right now saying "man, I just spent all this money on these games and I'm getting tired of them already... what am I gonna do to keep myself occupied next?". Well, if I lived in Nevada, I'd probably start by getting out more often. Seriously, though - there are some really impressive games for the PSX, some of them that look impressive but aren't, and some that you'd probably blow off unless someone like me told you to check it out first. So here goes.

First off, the Playstation games that I think every Playstation owner should own. I don't use the term "must have" loosely, and I'm very critical when it comes to what games satisfy many different tastes... but definitely, positively, every Playstation owner should own **Resident Evil, The Need For Speed**, and yes, **Tekken**. I have a reason for every one, too.

Resident Evil is a "must have" because it is incredibly effective at what it does. It's creepy. And the mechanics, while they take some getting used to, are very simple. There just aren't enough games like this out there: good storyline, excellent ac-

tion, and simply the best graphics this system has seen yet. I still get spooked when a zombie pokes around a corner or starts gnawing on my foot when I think it's dead. You would think after having this happen several dozen times I would learn my lesson. If you don't have it Garry, check it out. And stick with it! It's easy to get stuck but well worth getting through. I always say that every game has its flaw and this one has it in the rotten voice acting. Hey Capcom! You need a voice actor? Right here. You'll never hear me fuck up "Look out! It's a monster!". Even in a girlie voice.

The Need For Speed is a driving game that surpasses other driving games on this system. I was a big fan of this game on the 3DO but it really is quite a bit better here. The greatest addition to the game is the two-player head to head mode. You can race split-screen against your buddy and the oncoming traffic (even traffic in your lane is oncoming when you're moving at 150 mph!). The 3DO version also didn't have a closed circuit track which this version has four of (one, "Lost Vegas" is hidden at the outset), there is also much better music, a bumper view that feels like you're skimming the road, and greatly enhanced SPEED. That was the 3DO's major criticism, and I think they got it right this time. You even get a "Rally" mode for each of the game's tracks via a special code. Try a Ferrari on a dirt road for a real lesson in skid control.

Many critics will jostle me for suggesting this, but you SAW **Tekken**. It was the fighting game that our nephew Chris couldn't pull away from. I've also had my PSX going at parties where there was always someone waiting to get their hands on a controller, even some people who've never played a video game before. **Tekken**'s characters are really cool, especially some of the hidden ones. How can you resist fighting as a polar bear (Kuma) or a sultry babe in a tight dress (Ana)? It's easy to play and although purists may not find it the fighter of choice, to novices and people who just want one good fighter, **Tekken** is the best. **Battle Arena Toshinden** is a close second. The sequel to both should top them both so if you're deciding after **Tekken 2** or **BAT2** is released...

A few more suggestions. I still like **Doom**, better than **Alien Trilogy**. For sports, both **NBA Shootout** and **NBA Live '96** are winners - **Shootout** if you're more into the graphics, **Live** if you're more into the stats, but both play superbly. **NHL Shootout** is the only hockey game but mucho fun, and I passed on **NFL Gameday** although I seem to be in the minority. There were way too many fumbles, interceptions, and sacks for me to take it seriously. It looks great though, and most PSX owners adore it. So far, no good baseball games. By the previews I've seen, Sony's **Pennant Race** looks to be the best, but you never know. I'll keep you posted.

So the rest of you are thinking "Hmm. I wonder what he would recommend as 'must have' on other systems?" and then again maybe you're thinking "Is this column ever going to end?", to which I will respond to the former and ignore the latter.

For systems like the Genesis or NES 8-bit, where there are hundreds of available games, the list of "must haves" is really huge. So let me limit myself by choosing MY favorite three by system, from the ancient consoles to present (major consoles only - I'll skip over the Arcadia 2001, RCA, Virtual Boy, etc.): Atari 2600: **Pitfall II, Adventure, Pac-Man Jr.** Atari 5200: **Dreadnaught Factor, Berzerk, Rescue on Fractalus**. Atari 7800: **Midnight Mutants, Crossbow, Robotron: 2084**. Cole-

coVision: **Tapper, Ladybug, Spy Hunter.** Intellivision: **Worm Whomper, Stadium Mud Buggies, Microsurgeon.** Vectrex: **Armor Attack, Dark Tower** (proto), **Star Castle.** Odyssey2: **KC Munchkin, Killer Bees, Quest for the Rings.** NES: **River City Ransom, Super Mario Bros. 2, Zelda.** SNES: **Super Smash TV, Super Bomberman 2, Final Fantasy III.** Sega Master System: **Phantasy Star, Parlour** Games, **Rampage.** Genesis: **NBA Live '96, World Series '95, Gunstar Heroes.** Turbografx-16: **Bomberman '93, Cratermaze, World Court Tennis.** 3DO: **Road Rash, Star Fighter, Foes of Ali.** Saturn: **Guardian Heroes, Sega Rally, Iron Storm.**

A READER SENT IN THE FOLLOWING BLURB, BUT I COULDN'T FIND HIS NAME IN THE TEXT, NOR DO I RE-MEMBER WHO SENT IT. GET IN TOUCH AND I'll CREDIT YOU NEXT ISSUE! SORRY!

The Game Closet Recreated
BLURB by A Mystery Reader

What a difference a year or two makes.

Now, I spend far too much time going to thrift stores and flea markets, checking internet sales and auctions, and generally figuring out what system to try my hand at next.

Last spring, I was just becoming aware of the community of collectors. A small ad in the old classified section of Computer Shopper put me in contact with Fred Horvath, who published *Video Game Trader*. There I picked up the two Imagic carts for Intellivision I had missed during their original release (**Tropical Trouble** and **White Water**). And I thought I was done with collecting. Admittedly, my collection of Intellivision, Atari 2600, and Odyssey2 games were cramped in the linen closet of my apartment while the Commodore 64 was on the floor of my bedroom closet. The video games were dragged out maybe once a year, hooked up to the television set, and played for a couple of hours. The C-64 computer, long since replaced by a PC-clone, was never touched.

Then it happened. I got the World Wide Web and newsgroup access in my office. And I ran across something called "rec.video.games.classic." I was amazed that some people had two hundred or more games for the 2600. So I started doing what they did - hitting the thrift stores. The $2 a cart charged by the Salem (Va.) Goodwill seemed small compared to the original price tags I had paid for some games. I went in one day and walked out happy with a dozen games. Soon, my collection of 75 games for the 2600 was over 100. And climbing fast.

The collection spilled over to my dinning room table and my spare room. In May, I bought my first 2600 (prior to that, I had to use my Intellivision II and System Changer to play the games). Other older systems found their way under beds as old systems and computers were added. An RCA Studio II here, a Mattel Aquarius there. I was hooked.

When I moved to West Virignia in August, I had 167 games for my Atari. My Intellivision collection, which I once thought was complete, had grown by three games and now lacked the elusive **Super Cobra.** I had a copy of the VGR list marked up to keep track of what I was buying. And a lot of boxes were piled up on the bed of my spare bedroom.

Over Thanksgiving, I branched out into newer games. Want-ing only to get the old Texas Instruments TI 99/4A when visiting my sister and her family, I walk away, not only with it, but with the Sega Genesis and the Super NES that had fallen into dis-use because my oldest nephew now had a Sony Playstation. My younger sister, whose Atari 2600 carts I had comman-deered to start my collection (since returned), had a Sega, so I knew about these games. I just never thought I would have them.

By the New Year, the tally stood at 273 games for the Atari 2600. With some finds, some purchases, and some account-ing changes, I have taken that total over 300 cartridges. For my Intellivision collection, I finally picked up **Super Cobra.** And other systems, from a Vectrex, to a Colecovision, to an Atari 7800 had been acquired.

Still, through all of this, something was missing. The game closet of years gone past, while cramped, was also convenient and comfortable. So I set out on a mission to recreate that feeling as much as possible.

First off all, I decided that the Atari 2600 and Intellivision games - the two systems which I play most often and the two for which I own the largest collections - would continue to be housed in the dinning room buffet. The systems to play these games - a Sears Video Arcade II and an Intellivision III, respec-tively - would continue to be housed in the entertainment center in the living room. Extras of these systems would be boxed and put away in the pantry (since I have no washer or dryer to put there, it has become valuable storage space).

Then I went to my extra bedroom and opened up the closet. Here, I would recreate my game closet. I began by removing the old computer software I had put on the shelf to get it out of the way. My Intellivision extras still in their original boxes, the Intellivoice, the ECS, the Music Synthesizer, the Wico Joy-sticks, were put to the left of the file cabinet. The metal shelf unit on the right of the file cabinet housed many of the systems. The top two shelves were devoted to theColecovision. The Atari 7800 and the Odyssey2 shared the next shelf. The newer systems - the Genesis and the SNES - were put on the follow-ing shelf with their games. My newest acqusitions come next: a Bally Astrocade and a Fairchild Channel F. Finally at the bot-tom, a home was made for the Commodore 64.

Next I filed away the games. In the first drawer was the Cole-covision. In the second drawer went the Atari 7800. In the third drawer was the Odyssey2. Then in the bottom drawer and on top of the cabinet went controllers and cables for the Atari 2600.

Finally, the top shelf was filled. Looking from left to right, the first thing stored are games forthe TI 99/4A, the Radio Shack Color Computer, and the RCA Studio II. But two-thirds of the room is taken up by systems: a Vectrex, a TI, a CoCo 3, a Stu-dio II, an Atari Video Pinball, an Unisonic Tournament 1000 (a pong-type game unit), and an Aquarius.

Miscellaneous stuff, like printers and disk drives, were boxed up and put under the bed. The thought is that it won't be used that often, so I didn't worry about being able to get it at a mo-ment's notice.

So now I store approximately 700 video game and computer cartridges and 17 different systems not unlike how I once stored about 200 games and three systems. Based upon my

MR. DO!

Frequently Asked Questions

Compiled by Tony Bueno

Special thanks to Dave Giarrusso, Matt Lewandowski, Jess Ragan, Tim Duarte, Mike Thibodeau, John L. Mooney, Sean Kelly, Lee Taylor, Marcel Gonzales, Doug Graham, and the compilors of the KLOV (Killer List of Video Games), without whom this list would not have been possible, and to Frank Polosky and Joe Santulli, for publishing this information.

Contents

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1. Who/What is Mr. Do?

Mr. Do! was a coin-op arcade release from Universal in 1982. It has many similarities with **Dig Dug**, a Namco coin-op, but in my humble opinion, **Do!** and his several sequels are far superior. It is debatable as to which one copied which, since both games were released in the same year. Here's my write up which appeared in the Feb/Mar 1993 Video Magic #107 (not verbatim):

Mr. Do!

In this game, the player is cast as Mr. **Do!**, a clown trying to harvest an orchard of cherries and apples. Along the way your enemies are Badguys, Diggers, Blue Chompers, and Alpha-monsters.

The setting of each level is very much like **Dig Dug** in that you must move **Mr. Do!** around on a path, or dig one as you move along, which is slightly slower. Your goal is either to collect all the cherries or kill all the enemies on the screen. There are two ways to kill enemies. First, there are the apples located in various places around the level. By luring enemies under these, they can be squashed, or by making them fall one place without hitting an enemy, they can be used to push enemies away or you may wait for more badguys to appear underneath, then push the apple over them to score multiple kills. **Do!**'s other defense is a "powerball," a a weapon that when thrown, moves erratically

Mr. Do! Sell Sheet

down any path it finds, thus you are never quite sure if it will go the way you want it to. This may sound like a negative aspect, but I find that it is very effective in long tunnels and much more effective than the **Dig Dug** pump.

Also in the game are food treats located in the middle of the screen. By eating these, the game is momentarily paused, and an Alphamonster comes out with four Blue Chompers. Alphamonsters have one letter of the word, "EXTRA" on their chest, and by destroying all of the alphamonsters, you are rewarded with an extra life.
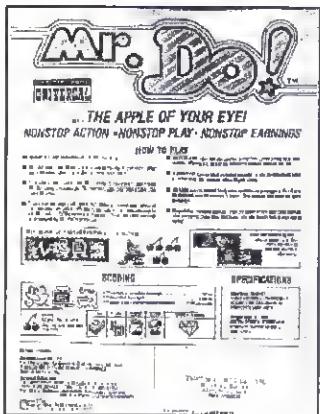
Mr. Do! Sell Sheet with gameplay instructions

Mr. Do! has well-drawn graphics, charming music, and gameplay that never grows old or tiresome. One of my all time favorites, highly recommended.

Things I forgot to mention in this review:

Badguys will temporarily become Diggers if they remain stationary (stuck behind an apple) long enough. Alphamonsters and Blue Chompers can eat the apples, if they are facing the direction in which they are dropped, or if the apples are already on the ground. This makes them more difficult to kill with apples.

There is also a diamond (not in some home versions, however) that will allow the player to automatically skip the level. It's uncommon, but when it does happen, it will be located in a recently broken apple. In the arcade this would also reward the player with an extra credit.

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2. What other games are in this series?

Mr. **Do!**'s Castle	(Oct. 1983)
Mr. **Do!**'s Wild Ride	(Jun. 1984)
Do! Run Run	(Nov. 1984)

Mr. **Do!**'s Castle

I wrote this synopsis in the June/July 1993 Video Magic #109 (again, not verbatim):

In 1984*, Universal followed up their small success of Mr. Do! with the sequel, **Mr. Do!'s Castle**. Rather than make this the same game with a few added enhancements, they decided to go in an entirely different direction.
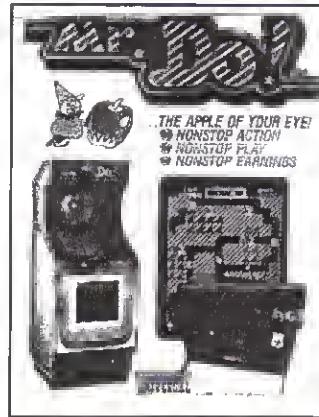
This time, enemies (which I believe are supposed to be unicorns) have invaded **Mr. Do!'s Castle** and his only defense is a hammer which is ineffective on the unicorns themselves. Instead, **Mr. Do!** must use the hammer to hit floor tiles to either acquire the cherry or key displayed on it, to cause the unicorns to fall in and repair the hole, or to squash enemies with falling tiles from above.

To get from floor to floor, there are both straight ladders that cannot be moved and ladders facing diagonally which may be kicked left or right to suit your needs. If all three key tiles are hit, the doors at the top of the castle light up. When **Mr. Do!** touches these doors, all enemies become alphamonsters with one of the letters of the word EXTRA, and may be crushed with the hammer. (Note: only the alphamonsters may be killed by hitting them directly with the hammer.) The only things remotely related to the original were the cherries to acquire to pass a level, and the fact that by killing all the alphamonsters, the player is rewarded with an extra life.

Having played only the arcade and 5200 versions, I can say that the 5200's graphics were only average. **Mr. Do!'s** clown outfit can be vaguely recognized and the keys and cherries were easily identifiable. The music is happy, childish, and perfectly suits this game.

Although I probably preferred the original, this sequel is highly entertaining and challenging. Originality and innovation are what makes this cart a winner.

*I see now that I was initially incorrect on the game's date.

Things I forgot to mention in the review:

There are three types of unicorns: Orange - slow, nothing special Green - faster, Blue: fastest and can multiply if not killed promptly (in the arcade, the colors were red, blue, and yellow). If a green unicorn is in a hole, you may hammer it through the floor, but it will be raised up one level in terms of power. Blue unicorns may not be hit through the floor. One platform in each level has a skull tile at either end. If both skulls are hit, the entire floor will go down, as will any enemy trapped between those tiles. Allegedly, the arcade had a diamond as well.

Mr. Do!'s Wild Ride

Unlike the other three **Do!** games, there is much difference in opinion regarding **Wild Ride**. Matt Lewandowski calls it his favorite of the series and one of the greatest arcade games of all time, Jess Ragan says it was definitely the worst in the series and an overall terrible game. I've played it once, and although I didn't think it was bad, I don't think it was nearly as good as the others.
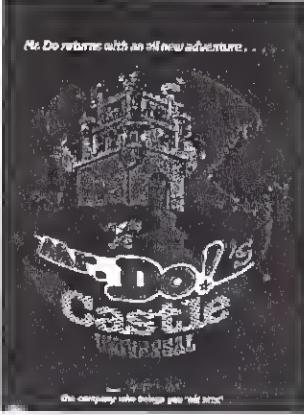
From Matt Lewandowski's description of **Wild Ride** in the April/May 1995 Video Magic #120 in addition to letters from both Matt and Jess, here's what I've compiled:

Mr. Do!'s scenario is a rollercoaster, and the object is to reach the top. As the cars (and eventually pirate ships and other obstacles) speed around the track, you may escape by using a super speed button, or by climbing up small ladders scattered about the track. Two icons are located at the top ranging from graham crackers to diamonds to the letters EXTRA. The icons change either at randomly timed intervals or upon collecting a cherry located at the top of a ladder (possibly both). The game is timed, and the timer ticks faster when the super speed button is depressed.

First screen	:	Basic roller coaster
Second	:	Large bobbing pirate ship on coaster.
Third	:	Elevators utilized to complete the level.
Fourth	:	Bowling balls fly around the track.
Fifth	:	Carousel intersects coaster.
Sixth	:	Elevators in circular paths.

Do! Run Run

Unlike **Wild Ride**, I've had more success compiling information about this one. I've never seen this one either, but I have many screen shots from back issues of RePlay magazine, and descriptions from numerous kind souls, so I have a very good idea of how this one played. Also, everybody to whom I've spoken about this game has nothing but good things to say about it. Dave Giarrusso, Jess, Lee Taylor, and a few arcade game dealers are all unanimous in their accolade of **Do! Run Run**.

This information was compiled from the aforementioned sources:

The fourth and final game in the **Mr. Do!** series had our clown protaganist pitted in a three-dimensional, three-leveled playing field with dots evenly configured around the board and two strategically placed logs at the edge of one of the higher levels. When the player walks around the dots, a line is drawn around them. Once the line is completed and the dots have been boxed, they become cherries.

The alphamonsters are back this time, as are several other monsters including snakes, evil **Pac-Man**-looking creatures, and possibly a slimy blob enemy as well. The Blue Chompers have been

Mr. Do!'s Castle Sell Sheet
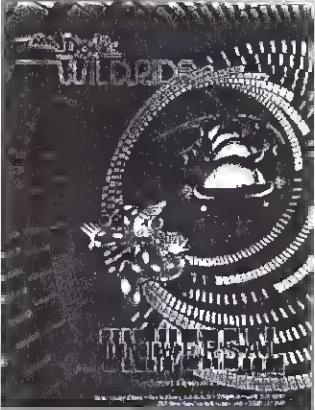
Mr. Do!'s Wild Ride Sell Sheet

Mr. Do!'s Castle Sell Sheet
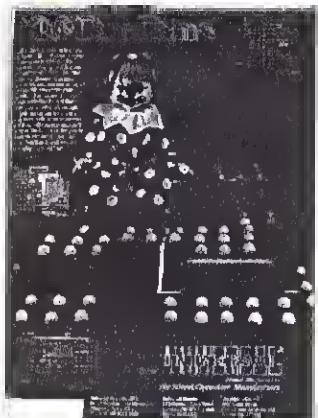
Do! Run! Run! Sell Sheet

replaced by what appear to be little triangular enemies with big eyes which (very) vaguely resemble wind-up mice.

Mr. Do! has his powerball back, and the logs may be used to crush enemies, similar to the apples in the first game. An dark spot on the screen is illuminated to become a treat which, once eaten, pauses the pac-men and snakes and causes the alpha-monsters and henchpeople to come out. If you are directly in line with the snakes, they curl up and fly at you at rapid speed.

Here's a brief description from the ad for the game in the November 1984 issue of *RePlay*:

Do! Run Run

*... and better than ever in the new game, **Do! Run! Run!** You run for your life as you're pursued around a 3-dimensional playing field, Up and down the stairs you race - just one step ahead of danger. A Sizzling Snake whizzes past and cuts off your escape! Quickly you throw your powerball and run as more snakes approach, rocketing balls of flame. No time to get another powerball. Hurry! Roll the log and let it crush everything in its path. More monsters appear! How will you ever escape?! Non-stop action is in store for you in the*

Do! Run! Run! screen shot

latest Mr. Do! adventure from Universal. You'll be breathless every time you play Do! Run! Run!
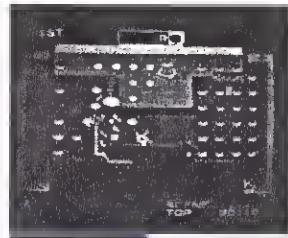
The ad has three screen shots over a photograph of a cute stuffed clown sitting at the top of three steps. The levels are filled with different colored rubber balls, and masking tape on the floor draws a box around some of the balls.

There is another ad from September of the same year that has many more screen shots, but they're all very small. I've scrutinized all of the photos with a magnifying glass, and I've composed some fairly decent drawings of two of the screen shots.

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3. Descriptions of the characters, levels, settings, intermissions, etc.

Badguys: Look kinda sorta like little wild-eyed red dinosaurs with blue arms.

Diggers: Resemble ugly gila monsters with protruding tongues.

Alphamonsters: Friendly looking monsters with no remarkable features. They have two eyes on top, a big blue chest with a letter on it, two legs, and no arms. They do, however, change appearance when they're eating an apple.

Blue Chompers: Very similar in appearance to the ghosts in the Pac-Man games. The only big difference is that the Blue Chompers have large mouths. They are well-animated, especially when eating an apple. Upon doing so, they open their mouth really wide, change to white in color, and greedily chew and swallow the apple. The alphamonsters also look the same when they are eating an apple.

Unicorns: Not a very good graphical rendition of the mythical beasts. Basically, they are badguys with horns.

Snakes: They're not rattlers, cobras, or any particular specie of snake. A snake is a snake is a snake...

Evil Pac-Man: Are green in color and have two yellow stalks protruding from the upper facial region, which are most likely eyes. They've got large mouths with two vampirish front teeth.

Alphamonster Henchmen: In **Do! Run Run**, they resemble wind-up rats, being little triangular creatures with eyes toward the pointed end.

Green Slimy Blob: I'm still not 100% certain they exist in **Do! Run Run**, but the name pretty much says it all.

The level configurations for the first game have very distinct shapes. There is always a pre-made path, and it always says something, usually the number of the level you're on. For example, levels 2 through 9 have the corresponding number written into the path. The first level has a period and a capital D from the middle of the game's title, and the tenth stage has a zero with a diagonal line through it.

The first game has several intermissions as well. Every three levels, a close up is shown with an Alphamonster and Digger running away from **Do!**, who is pushing an apple. Simultaneously the time in which the previous three levels were completed is displayed, as is the way they were defeated, represented by a Badguy (killing all enemies), Alphamonster (spelling EXTRA), Cherry (collecting all of them), or diamond.

Do! Run! Run! Coin-op

Another other kind of intermission occurs when EXTRA is spelled. The level is automatically completed, and we see a close up of **Mr. Do!** hitting a helpless Badguy with a powerball, who then waves a white flag while the powerball reappears in the form of an extra 1up in the life register with the message "Congratulations! You win EXTRA Mr. Do!" appearing at the top of the screen.
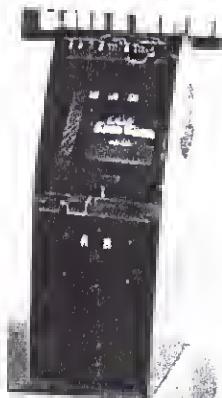
The third intermission is shown when a diamond is collected. "Congratulations! You Win Special. One More Game," is the text accompanying another close up of **Mr. Do!**, doing a (one-handed) handstand on a huge diamond. The clown then drops a coin with a skull on it to the bottom of the screen.

All other games had intermissions for the diamond and extra lives in addition to an attract mode, which was used to show players rudimentary moves.

***

4. What home versions are available?

Mr. Do! is available for 2600, ColecoVision, C-64 and Atari 800 disk, Game Boy, and most recently Super Famicom. I loved the 800 version, the Game Boy's rendition is OK, but is hurt greatly by the scrolling of the screen, and the Super Famicom version is arguably the closest arcade to home translation I've seen. It also has adjustable difficulty levels and a battle mode, which has enhanced graphics and allows two-player

competitive play.

Mr. Do!'s Castle is available for 2600, CV, 5200, and Atari 800 cartridge. It probably exists for C-64 as well. The best one I've played is the CV cart, it has better graphics and music than the 5200's. But the 5200 version is certainly not bad. I'd be willing to bet that the 800 cart is very similar, if not identical, to its 5200 counterpart.

Mr. Do!'s Wild Ride exists in disk format for the C-64. It has a few levels missing from the arcade.

Do! Run Run was released overseas (and possibly in the U.S. as well) for the ST and Amiga.

John L. Mooney has told me about the forthcoming **Neo Mr. Do!** for Neo Geo CD and he says he recalls the game containing giant falling logs! I called SNK, who told me that it is slated for a fourth quarter 96 release. SNK will allegedly release their most popular games for the Playstation, so there is more than a glimmer of hope of seeing **Mr. Do!** on a modern system.

Mr. Do! Home game advertisement

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5. Recurring items in each game

All Do! games have:

cherries
an EXTRA system for obtaining more lives
a diamond

***

6. Was there a fifth game?

No, but it was planned. Universal released one animated laserdisc game called "Super Don Quixote," which I never saw either. They had planned to release several other games on laserdisc, among them was "Adventure Mr. Do!". I can only assume Universal went belly-up shortly after their first laser game was released, and that killed any chance of the fifth Do! game ever seeing the light of day. This is a real tragedy for me, as **Space Ace** and **Dragon's Lair II** are two of my favorite arcade games. I can only imagine what a fully-animated Do! game would have been like.

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7. Trivia

Wild Ride is the only Do! game without monsters.

One version of **Castle** in the arcade has no cherries, and the unicorns must be killed to complete a level.

The Asian version of **Castle** is called "Mr Do vs. the Unicorns".

The ColecoVision version of **Mr. Do!** has the wrong music, no intermissions, and the Blue Chompers have the ability to dig tunnels, unlike in the arcade.

The music from the first game is a famous classical piece ("The Can Can," I think).

Mr. Do! appears different on screen from the intermissions.

The Game Boy **Mr. Do!** art looks nothing like the classic renditions of the clown.

Mr. Do!'s Wild Ride may be an homage to Mr. Toad's Wild Ride, an attraction at Disneyland.

There is some debate surrounding the titles for the games. I've seen a picture of the arcade game of **Castle** called **Mr. Do's Castle** while the ad clearly calls it **Mr. Do!'s Castle**. Similarly, the third title may be **Mr. Do!'s Wild Ride**, **Mr. Do's Wild Ride**, **Mr. Do!'s Wildride**, or **Mr. Do's Wildride**. The ad for the fourth game is even more confusing as it calls the game **Do! Run Run** in the logo, but calls it **Do! Run! Run!** in the text.

In the original arcade version of **Mr. Do!**, if all the dirt around a cherry is removed, it becomes a rose.

The final treat in the original is quite interesting.

A list of food treats in Mr. Do! (Arcade, Atari 800, and Super Famicom)

Scene	Treat
1	Cherry cake slice
2	Graham crackers
3	Bowl w/cherries
4	Ice cream sundae
5	Cheeseburger
6	"
7	Green and white cake (lime?)
8	"
9	Waffle
10	"
11	Sandwich, cut diagonally
12	"
13	Bottle of milk
14	"
15	"
16	Fried eggs, over easy
17	"
18	"
19	Pancakes
20	"
21	"
22	Margarita (might be a martini or pina colada, but definitely an alcoholic beverage of some sort)

List of treats in Game Boy Mr. Do!

Scene	Treat
1	Cherry cake slice
2	Graham crackers
3	Fried egg
4	Sundae
5	Cheeseburger
6	Banana

7	Muffin
8	Game Boy (yum!)
9	Cookie
10	Phone
11	Milk Bottle
12	Carrot
13	Fish
14	Drumstick (as in turkey leg, not ice cream cone)
15	Umbrella
16	Boot
17	(Repeat level 1)

List of treats for Mr. Do!'s Wild Ride

Points	Treat
100	Sundae
200	Cocktail
300	Umbrella

400	Sword
500	Money bag
600	Trophy
500	EXTRA letter
10,000	Diamond

***

The release of **Mr. Do!** for the Super Famicom, the (HOPEFULLY!) pending **Neo Mr. Do!**, and the compilation of this FAQ prove that this series is neither gone nor forgotten. With present and future arcade conversions for Playstation and IBM PC CD-ROM, perhaps someday my dream of playing all **Mr. Do!** games in their original arcade formats will become a reality. I would encourage every classic gamer who enjoys this series to do everything in his or her power (i.e. letter writing, making phone calls, posting internet messages, etc.) to let their voice be heard regarding their favorite classic games.

Blurb-A-Thon (continued)

history and current trends, when I move, I will have to get a three-bedroom place to live. One bedroom for me, one for guests, and one for my games. Target date for moving: 1997.

Something Like ROMpage
BLURB by Sean Kelly

Wow, this time of the month sure comes around fast ! Seems like I just finished writing the last column when I find out the next one is due. I can't see how "real magazines" do it monthly, but when that's what you get paid for I suppose it's a little easier.

Last issue I gave Sega and Nintendo a swift kick in the ass so I wanted to take a little space here to offer some kudos to Sega for something they've done that's excellent in my opinion! I recently got my hands on a Nomad and it is AWESOME!!

It's distribution is limited (which I'll touch on a little later), so for those of you that may be unfamiliar with it, here's something of a description. It's roughly the same size as Sega's Game Gear although shaped differently in that it's squared instead of rounded. It has six controller buttons for games that make use of Sega's three extra buttons and the "mode" button for games that are incompatible with the extra buttons. Your standard volume, brightness, and headphones jack (stereo no less) are present as is a second controller port for use in 2-player games. There is also an A/V out connector that will let you display the games on TV's equipped with RCA input jacks.

A feature that I found to be well thought-out is the detachable battery pack. Battery compartments for most handheld systems make for a considerable waste of space and would have made this unit probably 15-20% larger. Instead, Sega opted for a battery pack very similar to those used on camcorders which gives you the option of removing it when playing with the AC adapter.

According to what I've heard, there are a handful of Genesis games that do not work properly on it, but 99% of them do work perfectly. My first thought when I heard about the system was that images that were meant to be displayed on a TV would be much too small on a three inch screen, but the resolution on the screen is such that I have not had this problem at all.

The Nomad has given new life to a system that hadn't been touched in months around my house. Playing a "quick" game while sitting at my desk is a hell of alot easier than monopolizing the TV for a half-hour. I keep it handy with a small selection of my favorite Genesis games and when my computer is busy doing something or if I'm talking to someone on the phone I don't want to be talking to I just whip it out and play a little **Streets of** Rage II while the person rambles on (just kidding guys)!

Now before you run out and get one based solely on my recommendation like you always do, you're going to need to know where to go because it's only sold at ONE store which kind of sucks. Toys R Us is the only place selling the Nomad currently. I don't quite understand the logic behind this move, but I can only assume that Sega is looking to score a "We Owe You" from the big boys at TRU. Probably a good move on Sega's part, but kind of a pain for the consumer to deal with.

***

Gonna mix a little classic-talk in here for us classic collectors this issue also. The "Chronicles of a Classic-Addict" is something I've had in the back of my head for a while. I'm sure it describes many people's classic game collecting experiences so you might get a kick out of it....

I don't know how many of you have noticed this, but we appear to have lost a "tier" in classic game pricing and I'm proud to report that you were warned about it right in the pages of DP first.

When I first got into classic collecting there were four general pricing tiers for people selling games to other collectors. You had your commons which were always going for under five bucks. You had your mid-ranges which generally went between five and say twelve to fifteen bucks. You had your rares which went for twenty to fortyish and you had your very rares going for forty to God only knows how much. It seems that most people have dropped the mid-range section and every-

thing is either common or rare anymore. This is all a part of the price restructuring that's going on based on supply and demand. The supply of commons keeps getting bigger because nobody wants them while the supply of mid-range stuff is slowly drying up pushing all those titles into the rare category.

So who really cares you ask? Well you do and I'll tell you why. You're new to this collecting stuff. Introduced to it by a friend or you stumbled upon the classic newsgroup on the net, or whatever. Your search begins....

You start by hitting the casual garage sale that you happen to pass by on your way home from work. Occassionally you'll pick up a straggler or two in a "25 cent box", but one day you hit paydirt! A 2600 system, about 40 games, several controllers, and all for a measly ten bucks! You snag it and are off to check out your new toys.

"Hey I used to have this game!" you hear yourself saying several times as you're going through the box. Little do you know...

Now you're getting more serious about it spending a few hours on saturdays actively looking for garage sales. Here again, every once in a while you'll find a cart or two that you don't have, but generally you're skunked. One day you see someone else with a box of 2600 carts in their hand at a garage sale in YOUR neighborhood. You find yourself peering over the guy's shoulder to see what goodies are in the box. When he decides to take them, green with envy, you casually start up a conversation.

"You collect those old games too huh?" you say while paying absolutely no attention to the man, bobbing and weaving your head so as to get the best view of what's in the box.

"Yeah, I've been collecting them for a couple years now. I've got about 270 titles and am always looking for more." he says.

"Well I just started a couple months ago. So where do you find all your games?" you ask with your jaw now scraping on the sidewalk.

"I used to get most of my games at garage sales and flea markets, but I've been doing alot of trading on the internet of late because it's getting harder and harder to find games I don't already have anymore. A lot of.."

"270 titles is a lot of titles. Well, I'll see you around" you abruptly cut him off and scram the hell out of there.

"The internet - THAT'S the ticket!!" you think to yourself and make your way home to the PC.

Once on the net you realize just how wide-spread this thing really is. At first you thought you were the only psycho looking for all this "old crap", but you now realize there are hundreds, if not thousands, of others doing the same thing as you. The first thing that smacks you in the face in the newsgroups is all the people selling and trading carts and the PRICES they're asking for them.

"Are people actually PAYING that much for these games? I just picked up about 50 carts for a quarter each over the past few months! There's no way in hell I'M going to pay that much for them!!"

You're back on the hunt now more serious than ever. You don't have anything "good" to trade other people so you're going to have to be a loner at this and it doesn't bother you one bit. You now have a rarity list and know what's hot and what's not and you're determined to find some good carts now.

Flea markets are a great idea and you start looking for all the fleas in the area. You map them out and hit the garage sales on saturday and the fleas on sunday. By now you're wife is threatening divorce but you don't care...."these things are worth MONEY dear" you try to explain to here. The word "money" shuts her up for a while as it usually does with wives and you're off.

Saturday you're skunked! You only see a few carts the whole day and you already have them. You do pick up this giant moose-head on a plaque to hang in the den which you thought was just too cool to pass up. Not only are you hooked on classics at this point, but you've also now become a pack-rat and doomed to a life of bargain hunting or even bargain creating when there are no bargains to be found. "Bargain Creating" is the process by which you rationalize buying something you have absolutely ZERO USE for just so you don't go home empty-handed - ie the moose-head!

Sunday you do a little better but not much. You pick up 5 carts you didn't already have, but comparing them to your rarity list you realize that they are only listed as "uncommon"!

Several weeks go by with the same results. Your search has expanded to thrift stores now and your scored a few good finds, but not much. Your collection has now reached about 100 titles and you're feeling pretty bummed about the whole situation. You really NEED to get some new titles for your collection so you decide to take one more look at the internet.

"This isn't TOO bad." you're now thinking to yourself. "It's not exactly a quarter apiece, but for a couple bucks each I can get quite a few games I need." You scrounge up a few bucks (sneaking it past the wife of course) and pick up about 40 more titles you don't have at around two bucks each. Your collection is now at 145 titles and the pickings of titles you don't have, and can afford, are getting pretty slim so you decide to play your hand in a few smaller auctions on the net.

You win several titles you need and end up paying about four bucks each for them which isn't that bad you're thinking. Now you're a little more hip to what titles you've got a chance at finding at flea markets and such and what titles you'll most likely never see and you run across someone selling a cart for $50 that you'd seen go for $85 in an auction recently. "What a deal!!" you think to yourself and without even thinking you snatch it up. Fifty bucks is much more than what you'd wanted to pay for any cart, but it's "worth" more than that.

The thing that you don't realize has been happening to you all along is that you've become an addict! You NEED to get more games for your collection. You're past the point of even caring if you'll ever play them or not, whether the games are fun or not, whether you'll get divorced or not! You're hooked and one way or another, no matter the cost, you WILL get new games for your collection.

This scenario may have taken certain aspects of the collectors quest to an extreme, but for the most part I've seen it happen time and time again. The question is this though - is it
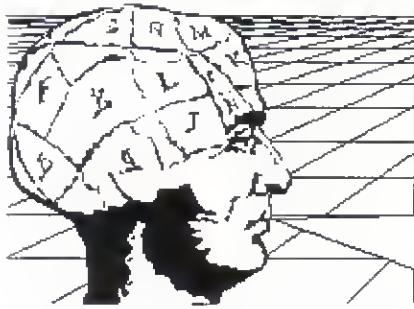
The Wacky World of AL
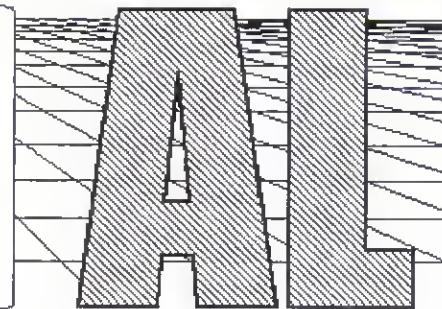
Hollywood Looks at Video Games, Continued
by Al Backiel

Pay a visit to your local video store. Make yourself some popcorn and pop that movie into the VCR. Here is the next installment of the trivia series on movies containing video game scenes. **Street Fighter**, which was covered previously has not come full circle. It started as an arcade game, turned into a home game version, became a movie, which became an arcade game (utilizing the digitized actors) called **Street Fighter: The Movie**, then became a home game version again, on both the Saturn and Sony Playstation.

MORTAL KOMBAT (1995, starring Christopher Lambert, Robin Shou, and Cary Hiroyuki-Tagawa, **) This movie looks like it did the best box office of the ones based on videogames. The special effects are the hightlight. The director (Paul Anderson) seems to have a lot of fun with morphing techniques, slomo, fast-mo, and other computer magic. I could have done without the thunderous sound track, which gave me a headache. The plot concerns a martial arts tournament which the three heroes enter for various reasons: Liu Kang (avenging his brother's death), Johnny Cage (out to prove he's no phony), and Sonya Blade (I forget). Lord Raiden uses his magic and acts as a sort of a referee. Princess Kitana is around as a love interest and to provide tips on winning. Shang Tsung is the villain and like all good villains, he doesn't believe in fair play. His loyal henchmen include Goro, Sub-Zero, Scorpion, and Kano. All the characters from the original Mortal Kombat put in an appearance. The fatalities have been toned down. Action movie fans will not be disappointed. At times the film gets into some heavy mysticism, but winds up being one huge karate match with a thin plot.

THE NET (1995, Sandra Bullock, Jeremy Northam, Dennis Miller, ***) Sandra Bullock plays the role of a computer programmer who works out of her home. She beta tests various software looking for bugs and viruses. A client sends her a disk containing a video game called Mozart's Ghost. Clicking on an icon on the title screen and typing a key combination will connect you to a hidden Internet address. From here you can break into almost anybody's data base. She is discovered by the hackers and they delete all her personal computer records (credit cards, DMV, passport, etc.). She becomes a fugitive from justice and the hackers try to erase her next. Some of the early scenes show her debugging a game that looks like **Wolfenstein 3D**. Nintendo and Sega are mentioned in a phone conversation.

VIRTUOUSITY (1995, Denzel Washington, Russell Crowe) The movie opens with a virtual reality sequence. Denzel in onscreen pursuing a serial killer inside a police training simulator. He tracks him down, but still loses the game because his adversary "cheated". The VR villain eventually manages to cross over into the real world and Denzel spends the rest of the movie tracking him down.

HACKERS (1995, F. Stevens, JL Miller, A. Jolie) A group of rebellious laptoppers are pitted against an evil super hacker. There is one scene where the young hero tries to beat the high score on an arcade game which is the equivalent of the home game **WipEout**, seen on both Saturn and Playstation.

There is a new trend in movies nowadays called the "interactive movie". Audiences in special theaters are equipped with controllers and can vote at various checkpoints on what direction they want the plot to take. The movie itself is actually a laser disc set up with all the possible scenarios. So far there have been two such films:

RIDE FOR YOUR LIFE (1995, Adam West) The ads read "Don't just sit there! Play Interfilm, the world's first interactive movie game!"

MR. PAYBACK (1995) The first interactive movie. Opened to cool reviews and modest success. It was not as sophisticated as RIDE FOR YOUR LIFE, however.

With the advent of CD ROM, more and more games are featuring full motion video sequences. Sometimes it's just for fluff and other times its an integral part of the game play. Many of these segments hire unknown actors to play the roles. Several can be considered on par with full-scale Hollywood productions. Some well-known stars have been digitized and are very realistically depicted on the home video game screen. Here is a short list of what is out or will be out shortly:

DAEDALUS ENCOUNTER (3DO) - Tia Carrere (the Wayne's World babe).
DOUBLE SWITCH (Saturn, Sega CD) - Deborah Harry (Blondie), Corey Haim.
FOX HUNT (3DO, Saturn) - Timothy Bottoms, George Lazenby (one-time James Bond), Rob Lowe.
MAXIMUM SURGE (3DO) - Yasmeen Bleeth (Baywatch), Walter Koenig (Chekhov).
RIPPER (3DO, PSX) - Christopher Walken, Karen Allen, Burgess Meredith.
SNOW JOB (3DO) - Tracey Scoggins (Dynasty).
SOLAR ECLIPSE (Saturn) - Claudia Christian (Babylon 5).
THE HORDE (3DO, Saturn, PSX) - Kirk Cameron.
VOYEUR (CD-I) - Robert Culp.
WING COMMANDER III, IV (3DO, PSX) - Mark Hamill, Malcolm McDowell, John Rhys-Davies, Ginger Lynn Allen (former porn star).

BLINK AND YOU'LL MISS IT DEPT.

FEARLESS (1993, Jeff Bridges, Rosie Perez, ***) Plane crash survivor thinks he's invincible. There is one scene where he pulls the plug on two kids playing **Splatterhouse**. He tells them that you don't really lose a life.

ROOKIE OF THE YEAR (1993, Thomas Ian Nicholas, Daniel Stern, Gary Busey, ***) Freak accident causes a teenager to possess a rifle-arm and winds up pitching for the Chicago Cubs. Busey to Nicholas (who is busy playing Game Boy): That's gonna make you stupid. (Pause) I guess it already did.

BILLY MADISON (1995, Adam Sandler) Kid: **Mortal Kombat** on the Sega Genesis is the best video game ever. Billy: I disagree. It's a very good game, but I think **Donkey Kong** is the best game ever. Kid: **Donkey Kong** sucks! Billy: You know something? YOU suck!

MAN OF THE HOUSE (1995, Johnathan Taylor Thomas, Chevy Chase, Farrah Fawcett, *) Chevy tries hard to be a big brother to his future step son by enrolling them in a wilderness program. There is a scene where the youngster is in an arcade playing **Virtua Fighter**.

Blurb-A-Thon (continued)

such a bad thing to be addicted to? Yes some of the games are going to cost you a pretty decent buck unless you get real lucky. Yes you're going to spend alot of time scrounging around for them. And yes you'll probably get in a good argument or two because of the money you're spending, but they way I look at it there are alot of worse things collectors could be doing. Take a look around you at what some other people are doing with their time and money in regards to their addictions. Hey, drugs are fairly readily available, but you get plenty high when you run across that $80 cart at a flea market for a quarter! I see alot of my friends hanging out at the bars paying three bucks each for a beer. I'll sit at home and pick up a six-pack for that price if I want to and spend the other fifteen bucks on a game or two thank you very much. What about gambling? If I have to choose between spending $25 on the lotto and the same amount on a game, I don't think I need to tell you where my dough's going.

I'm not trying to rationalize the prices that the rarer games are going for by any means, or even saying that collecting games is TRULY addictive. Prices have skyrocketed on the rare stuff bottomed-out on the commons. And I'm sure 98% of you wouldn't sell the kids in to slavery to pick up a Chuckwagon in an auction either (but there is that 2% of you now isn't there?!) The thing I AM saying is that if you're going to have a hobby it's going to cost you money no matter what it is. Classic game collecting can be expensive, but for the most part, it is generally agreed-upon that the rare stuff will retain it's value for quite some time to come. I'm fairly comfortable knowing that the money I spent has simply taken the form of a cartridge and can be converted back to cash without too much hassle if need be. The end result of alcohol isn't worth piss, pun inteneded, and wall-papering my room with losing lottery tickets wouldn't be much fun. Those of you that can afford to do all three, I'm a hard worker - lemme know if your firm is looking for any help!!

A Resurgence of Interest in Classic Arcade Games
BLURB by Tony Bueno

A true godsend has befallen the world of electronic gaming - many classic arcade arcade hits from the proverbial Golden Era are resurfacing in compilations for modern home consoles and PCs! For years we have been clamoring about how much we miss the classics, and that as good as 2600, ColecoVision, INTV, 5200, 7800, or NES verions were, they still didn't compare to the arcade originals. Our eons of waiting, hoping, and

yearing to play our favorite classic games is finally over!

Namco Collection Vol. 1, containing Pac-Man, Rally X, Pole Position, Bosconian, Galaga, and **Toy Bop** (I'm unfamiliar with this latter title) has been released for the Playstation, and **Williams Arcade Classics** a.k.a. **Williams Arcade's Greatest Hits** containing Defender I and II, **Joust, Sinistar, Bubbles,** and Robotron: 2084 have been or will be released for PC, Playstation, Super NES, and Genesis. Microsoft is also following suit, and has released two arcade PC compilations. **Centipede, Tempest, Asteroids, Missile Command,** and **Battlezone** are included in Vol. I and **Dig Dug, Pac-Man, Pole Position**, and **Galaxian** grace Vol. II.

There is a major difference between many of these versions and their appearances on past platforms, however. These games are emulated as opposed to translated, which means that these versions are identical in every conceivable way to their arcade counterparts, right down to the bugs, dip switches, marquee options, and other stuff most of us never got to see at the local game room. And believe me, emulation makes all the difference in the world. Perhaps best of all is the high score chart, which constantly beckons the player to try to beat the highest score on each game. Therein lies their most attractive feature; no matter how good you get, or what level you succeed in penetrating, it is always possible to do better.

The release of these classics in their original formats is nothing short of a dream come true. More compilations are on the way from Namco, Konami, Nichibutsu, and possibly others. More than anything else, this will prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the gameplay of today's most popular games is put to shame by the innovation, originality, beguiling charm, and overall fun of the classics. This is an absolutely elating development.

Now if only they'd release a compilation of Universal's arcade games...

***

The newest gaming trend nowadays seems to be a great influx of texture-mapped, bit-mapped or rendered graphics. **Tekken, Virtua Fighter, War Gods, Soul Edge,** and **Toshinden** are but a few examples of games utilizing this type of graphics. My only question is why?

Perhaps it's just a personal dislike of mine, but when I take a

Interview!

John Dondzila, Vectrex game designer
by Al Backiel

Much to the delight of many Vectrex owners, who have long accepted their library to be complete, TWO new games were released in 1996. Independent programmer John Dondzila, a Software Etc. manager who hails from Old Bridge, New Jersey is responsible. Our Al Backiel managed to catch up with John.

John Dondzila

DP: Like many gamers, I was pleasantly surprised when it seemed like out of nowhere a new game (Vector Vaders) was released for the Vectrex, the first "third party" software ever for that system. What made you choose Vectrex?

Dondzila: It's the only system that has sufficient documentation. As far as the classics go, it is relatively easy to code. The original Vectrex games wre placed in the public domain on the Internet, which included documentation and development data. The disassembled listing of the EXEC ROM was useful. Without it, it would have taken me much longer to figure things out.

DP: Was Vector Vaders the first game that you ever wrote and sold?

Dondzila: Yes, it was the first I've ever attempted. I never worked for GCE or Milton Bradley.

DP: How are the sales going on Vector Vaders?

Dondzila: To date, there have been 39 sold. I still have back orders to fill!

DP: On a personal note, what is your profession and background?

Dondzila: I manage a Software Etc. store. Programming is a hobby for me. Most of what I have learned was self-taught. I do have a year of college, though.

DP: How long did it take you to program & test Vector Vaders and your more recent game, Patriots?

Dondzila: It took me ten days to do Vaders. That was almost non-stop. I was also off of work at the time. Patriots took about a month. I wanted to get it right, and I wanted to speed up the action. Programming both games was difficult because everything was new to me. I'm glad I did it - I didn't expect that there would be such a good reaction. It seems to have taken off!

Screen shot from Vector Vaders

DP: So, you have your own website on the 'net. Is that expensive to maintain?

Dondzila: No. Actually, it costs me nothing extra to have a website. I just pay my regular monthly subscriber fee. I have screen shots, box graphics, and ordering information posted there... also previews.

DP: How do you manage to develop, assemble, package and ship the software at such a reasonable price?

Dondzila: I am not in it for the profit. I did it for the fun of it and to prove that it could be done. I love the old game systems.

DP: The fact that everyone who orders Patriots gets their own personalized, signed, and serially numbered version is a nice touch. Was all of that your idea or did it come from the users?

Dondzila: 90% of it was my idea. The part about burning the serial number into the chip came from someone online. I think these features will make this game a collector's item someday. DP's own Sean Kelly is mentioned in the credits because I have an agreement with him for circuit boards, and in return he can use my code in his multi-

Screen shot from Patriots

carts. I've only met him online. You'll also see Mike Etler and friends in the credits. Mike is from the Classic Video Games store on Route 9 South in Howell, New Jersey. It's about thirty minutes south of me. Mike supplies me with the game boxes. The "friends" are the ones I've met in his store.

DP: I hear you guys have regular game conventions. I was invited once but couldn't attend. How many people show up? When is the next one?

Dondzila: Actually, it's June 1st at 5:00. Some people may show up earlier. We had twenty show up last time. There was some trading going on. Next time I will be demonstrating a system emulator.

DP: Patriots and Vector Vaders are adaptations of popular classics. Do you think someday you'll program an original game idea?

Dondzila: Yes. I do not have anything concrete yet. I do plan to do a third game for the Vectrex. Right now I'm working
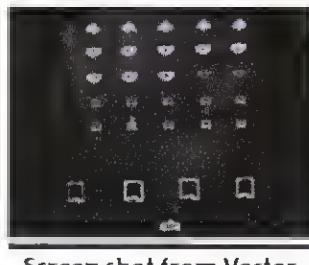
on a game for the ColecoVision, I just need to figure the system out. I might have to reverse-engineer it to do so. I hope to do at least one game for each of the old classic systems, eventually. That's the 2600, 5200, ColecoVision, and Intellivision.

DP: I have to ask - do you think Tempest or Battlezone are possibilites for future Vectrex projects?

Dondzila: Not Tempest. It has too much going on at one time. I don't see any way to make that happen, as it would run too slowly, plus it has so many levels. Battlezone is a possibility.
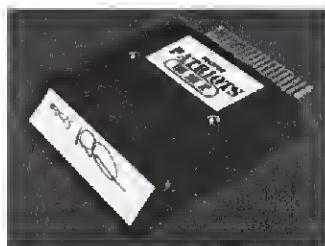
Patriots on cart

DP: What are your personal Vectrex favorites?

Dondzila: Mine Storm. That's my game. I'm not really a very good player!

DP: Thanks for your time, John, and GOOD LUCK to you in the future! DP applauds those hearty souls who are designing games for dead systems. People like John Dondzila and Ed Federmeyer (Edtris for the Atari 2600) are breathing some new life into them. Keep up the excellent work, guys!

JOHN DONDZILA'S WEBSITE:
http://www.crisp.net/home/pcjohn/index.html

JOHN DONDZILA'S EMAIL ADDRESS
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Blurb-A-Thon (continued)

look at any of these games, graphically they seem inferior to just about every traditional two-dimensional fighter, even those for 16-bit consoles. Does anybody really prefer the blocky, choppy, and wholly artificial look of **Tekken** over the cartoonish **SFII**? Can anyone really compare the appearance of any MK game and honestly say that **Virtua Fighter** looks better? Additionally (this is strictly my personal opinion), these games don't come close to any MK or SF game in terms of playability, either.

Probably most disturbing about this trend is that rendered games are steadily permeating platform, simulation, and role playing games as well. Take a look at the preliminary Nintendo Ultra 64 games and you'll see what I mean. The new **Mario, Zelda, Pilotwings, Goldeneye** 007, and **StarFox** games are perfect examples.

Frankly, to me these games look putrid. **Goldeneye** and **Legend of Zelda** look particularly awful, but **Super** Mario 64 is certainly no prize either. I mean, **Super Mario All-Stars** had better graphics, for Christ's sake!

The emphasis on texture-mapped graphics seems to have no end in sight. Allegedly, MK IV will follow in the footsteps of **Tekken** and **War Gods** as well. This is the most disturbing and insidious trend I've seen since the crash of '84, and I sincerely hope that these games do not represent the future of videogaming, or I may give up modern games altogether.

Virtual Boy Flash
BLURB by Jeff Cooper

Though more of a novelty than anything else, the Nintendo Virtual Boy's great 3-D graphics make it undeniably cool. The system has failed to catch on - Nintendo acknowledges as much - but the problem has been economics rather than weaknesses in the hardware or software. The Big N doomed the VB by making it too expensive. At my local electronics store, VB sells for $159. Add another $20 for an AC adapter (really a necessity) and $90-$100 for a couple of games, and you've blown enough cash to buy a Saturn or a Playstation.

Now comes a breakthrough: for several months now, Blockbuster Video has been giving away - er - selling its used Virtual Boys for $29.99. For that price you get the VB complete with the AC adapter and a rugged plastic carrying case. A complete ripoff at $159 (actually $179 with the adapter), VB is a bargain beyond belief at thirty bucks. As of this writing the following used games were available (complete with B & I) at $12.99: **Teleroboxer, Mario's Tennis, Red Alarm, Virtual Baseball,** and **Galactic Pinball.** These VBs sell out instantly, and it may be difficult to locate one. As best as I can tell, each Blockbuster was told to keep three VBs on hand for rental, and to sell all the rest. I'm told each Blockbusters will be instructed to sell off their remaining three in the future, so if you haven't gotten one, there is still hope even at this late date. By the way, some Blockbusters are independently owned (or something) as a few knew nothing about this deal.

Here's a brief rundown on the games I've tried:

Galactic Pinball - The most pleasant surprise of the five. Four different boards, and the 3-D is great. The boards are very simple but I disagree with those reviewers who trashed the game for that reason. Too many bells and whistles would detract from the 3-D experience that is supposed to be the focus here, so I prefer the simplicity. This isn't a great "sim" (the ball is actually a puck), but it isn't meant to be. Rating: 8

Red Alarm - The best of the five. A cross between **Star Fox** and the old **Star Wars** arcade game, but with a whole lot more going on. This shooter succeeds in transporting you into a unique 3-D world quite unlike any videogame I've played. With its clean, straight line graphics, **Red Alarm** is sort of like a super-hopped-up Vectrex game. Rating: 9

Mario's Tennis - A decent, average tennis game that is enhanced nicely by the 3-D imagery. Fun to play now and then. Rating: 7

Virtual Baseball - the batter/pitcher scenario is completely unique, thanks to the 3-D. Once you hit the ball the perspective shifts so you can see the entire field, which looks way cool in 3-D. The problem is the fielders: it looks like ants have invaded your VB. Moreover, all of the outfielders (or infielders) move simultaneously when you chase the ball, creating all sorts of

fielding problems and giving the game an ugly 8-bit feel. The designers deserve credit for complicating pitching and batting a bit, offering high, medium and low swings and a power meter for the pitcher. The game offers fun 3-D arcade action, but it isn't at all sophisticated - there isn't even an instant replay feature. Rating: 7

Teleroboxer - the worst of the five. This is sort of a "futuristic" 3-D version of **Punch Out** with different (and less amusing) characters. Pretty soon you forget about the 3-D (which is less effective here than in the other games), and you're left with a thoroughly mediocre first-person fighter. Rating: 5

In all, the VB will never become your primary gaming system. But every so often it's fun to shove your head in your VB for 45 minutes or so for a novel 3-D experience. As a gaming machine, VB rates about a 5 at $159, but a 9 at $29.99. And there's another angle here: the system is bound to be collectible. Insiders are already dubbing the VB the Vectrex of the 90s. For the price of a SNES cart, you can get the complete system and 2-3 games. It's a no brainer. Start calling around.

Last minute flash: Blockbusters around here have just placed all of their Virtual Boy carts on sale for $9.99. So the game list now includes **Waterworld, Vertical Force, Jack Bros., Wario Land, Panic Bomber, Mario Clash,** and **Golf.** I haven't played these much but **Wario Land, Mario Clash,** and **Golf** get a thumbs up while the others get consigned to the "never play/ only collectible" heap. **Waterworld,** in particular, is nearly as bad as the movie.

"ATARI" APPARENTLY DEAD-- WHO CARES?
more BLURB by Jeff Cooper

As you've probably read, "Atari," Inc., has merged with some sort of computer hardware outfit and apparently has ceased console videogame operations all together. A few Jaguar titles that have already been developed will probably be released during the summer, but that's it. The Jag was selling for $49 at Babbage's and most carts have been deeply discounted.

Some people are lamenting the fact that the "grand-daddy of videogames" has gone under, and see this news as tragic, catastrophic, and historic. Bullshit. That word sums up my sympathy toward the news and my attitude toward "Atari," Inc.

I place "Atari," Inc. in quotations because they really had nothing to do with the company whose memory most of us revere. The real Atari died when Warner sold the company to the Tramiels back in eighty-four. History will only remember the new "Atari" as a farce and a sham. Let's face it - you and I could run a videogame company more effectively than the Tramiels did. Just consider the stupidity: after they bought Atari, they had 100,000 Atari 7800s, and games, sitting in warehouses, ready to go. But Jack Tramiel (AKA Jack the genius) didn't like videogames; he wanted to turn Atari into a computer giant like Commodore, and he fired practically everyone from the real Atari. Hey, the computer thing worked out great, huh? The Tramiels ignored "old" Atari research that said the vid market wasn't dead, waited until Nintendo proved it by achieving a virtual monopoly on the videogame market, and then released the 7800. A few carts developed by the old Atari came out, and they were great. But soon the Tramiels put to-

gether a staff to develop their own games; among the first eggs that they laid were **Karateka** and **Super Baseball,** two outrageously terrible videogames whose inferiority remained unrivalled until the appearance of the Jaguar. "Atari," Inc. had a window in 1985 to make some noise in the videogame world, but they blew it. And this wouldn't be for the last time.

The Tramiel promise was "power without the price." The slogan ought to have been "systems without the software." At a time in the late 1980s when the 7800 desperately needed new titles to stay afloat, what did the Tramiels do? Why, they released the Atari XE Game System, the biggest turkey in the history of this hobby. Who was the Einstein behind this move?

"Atari," Inc. did manage to release a few good games for the 7800 and they had a nice handheld in the Lynx, another system they killed with inadequate software support.

Then came the Jaguar - the Final Fiasco that mercifully killed this fraud of a videogame company. We'll never know whether this piece of hardware had the muscle to succeed. A couple of the carts suggest that it did. But the Tramiels' handling of their revolutionary system would've killed anything. Most of you are familiar with the story. "Atari," Inc. released the Jag something like a year and a half before the big boys (Sega, Sony) got into the advanced system act. Yet "Atari" did nothing with this lead. They promised eleven games upon release. Yet when the Jag came out they in fact had nothing ready in the way of games except the mediocre pack in.

"Atari" no doubt would like to excuse themselves by pointing to their lack of resources. Bullshit. Lack of resources doesn't explain why "Atari" flat out lied, again and again, to dealers and consumers: "dozens of games will be available by Christmas!" I thought Coleco took the cake in its campaign of lies surrounding the Adam computer. "Atari's" lies made Coleco look like the George Washington of the video world. Lack of resources doesn't explain the idiotic decision to release outrageously poor games like **Club Drive** and **Checkered Flag.** When you have a piece of crap on your hands, you wash it off, you don't try to sell it to the public. Who did the play testing for this company, some guy who hadn't seen a TV game since **Pong?** How much money and how many customers did they lose by releasing garbage like this? Did "Atari" ever conclude, "no, this game just sucks and we're going to cease development and devote our resources to more promising projects"????

Interestingly, the modest success the Jag did have was tied to its resurrection of old Atari titles like **Tempest** and **Defender.** But here's an interesting sidelight. Check out **Williams Arcade Classics** for the Playstation. This program includes histories and video clips that portray the original designers of the Williams games as heroes. Unless I missed something, **Tempest 2000** and **Missile Command 3D** for the Jag don't so much as mention Dave Thuerer, the brilliant, original designer of both of these Hall of fame classics. "Atari," you really put the "class" back into classics.

Conclusion? Obvious. Good-bye "Atari," Inc, and good riddance. You were a sacrilege, a disgrace to the good name of Atari. My condolences extend only to the many good people who lost their jobs thanks to Tramiel mismanagement. Meanwhile, I'll bet the Tramiels themselves are comfortable millionaires.

Just Who IS Tony Bueno, any-

way?
BLURB by Tony Bueno

Well, I'm 19, I go to the University of Texas at Dallas. Of modern games, I guess my favorites are 2-D fighters (Except KI. For some reason I detested it. Most likely the unfair auto combo system.), sports games and RPGs are my least favorites, but there are exceptions in these genres as well.

As a child, I grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area where there were an abundance of arcades, and of course I played them every chance I got. I always used to drool over ColecoVision, INTV, 5200, and 7800 systems because all I had growing up was 2600. Later we got an Atari 800XL for a family computer, which gave me access to a world of superb software including **Donkey Kong** with the pie factory from the arcade, a **Karateka** 1000 times better than the 7800 version (with a phat easter egg - if you walk up to the girl instead of running to her in the end, she kills you!), as well as great versions of **Qix** and **Galaxian**. It was the 800 disk version of **Mr. Do!** that hooked me on that game. I played that game for hours and hours on end. Even now that I've got the Super Famicom version, I'm still very impressed with how close the 800 version is to the arcade. Gameplay is very close, and every treat from the arcade version is included in the same order.

My all-time favorite game is **Pig Out,** a Leland coin-op. I will write a review of this game for an upcoming issue.

ATARI: WHAT WENT WRONG?
BLURB by Al Backiel

By now, most of you have probably heard the bad news coming out of Atari. The loss of half of the programming staff due to layoffs. The cancellation of in-house development on the Jaguar. Rumors flying about that production of the Jag unit itself has been halted. The resignation of their president. The announcement that they would be developing games for PC's only. And finally the merger with JTS, a manufacturer of hard drives. Most analysts view these decisions as Atari's demise. Although not officially dead. These recent events definitely leave them mortally wounded. I still hold out hope that they will survive long enough to finish what they started. That some company will bail them out. That they will be around to license their games and patents and maintain a presence. Atari is denying that they are quitting the video game business and are trying to get some third parties involved. Rumors say that the company is on the auction block. Nolan Bushnell, the founder, is showing signs of interest.

I have always been fiercely loyal to Atari, even through the lean years. I have all of their video game systems. I own more Atari-based software than any other company. Therefore I feel qualified and asked my editor if I could deliver what may very well be their eulogy. So what happened? How could a company that at times had the best hardware and software on the market get into this trouble? Let's go back in the ol' time machine to the early years and try to see what happened.

Atari pioneered the video arcade industry with **Pong.** When the 2600 was released in October 1977, it wasn't the first programmable home video game system. RCA Studio II, Magnavox Odyssey 100, Fairchild Channel F... these were already on the store shelves. The 2600 VCS as it was called had only

4K of memory. Incredibly, this was thought by the engineers to be more than enough. What set this new system apart? It provided extra switches for game variations. It had a demo mode to prevent phosphur burn-in. The biggest thing Atari had going for it was that they also made arcade games. They would license others. It was their acquisition of the Taito coin-op classic **Space Invaders** that really made the VCS take off. Atari was never alone, however. Odyssey2 and Bally's Astrocade were looking for a piece of the action. Mattel's Intellivision proved to be their largest competitor with their larger 8K machine, emphasis on professional sports titles and aggressive ad campaign.

Since Atari was not crediting the individual programmers, a group of them left and formed a new software company called Activision. Each game they produced gave full credit to the author of the program. In the early days, it was less of a team effort. Activision games were generally high quality and were in many instances superior to Atari's own. More and more third party software began to sprout up, and ultimately the sheer volume, poor quality, and lack of originality led to the "crash of '84". Before that happened, however, the ColecoVision arrived on the scene, a 16K machine. The 2600 had already begun to show its age. Atari fought back with its 5200 Supersystem, but made a few major mistakes in the process. The worst was switching to joysticks that were not self-centering, the second was that they were spending too much time recycling 2600 VCS titles and improving the graphic quality. Many gamers switched to Coleco for its original games and state of the art graphics. Coleco killed themselves by jumping half-heartedly into the computer business. The ADAM had its share of bugs! It was relatively high-priced and came with a tape drive instead of a disk. The cost of development drained the company's resources.

Atari was also starting to feel the pinch. They had shelled out a lot of green for blockbuster movie licenses such as **E.T.** and **Raiders of the Lost Ark.** It was **E.T.** that they really got burned on - although not all that terrible of a game, it was very frustrating. Bad reviews and word of mouth hurt sales. **E.T.** had been mass-produced and Atari took a beating on the many games that never left store shelves. A rumor persists that millions of carts were bulldozed under in a landfill in New Mexico. Atari was also pissing away big bucks on a contest that did not go over too big. This being the **Swordquest** Adventure. There was a tie-in with the comic book division (DC) of the paren company (Warner Communications). The Dungeons and Dragons-like storyline was supposed to run for four carts. The quest was never finished. Since it was basically trial and error, a lot of gamers simply walked away from the series. The video game market was collapsing, and many companies went belly-up. Atari managed to survive y concentrating on its computer and arcade divisions. The general consensus was that video games were just a fad that had run its course.

Over in Japan, a company called Nintendo was having success with an 8-bit system called the Famicom. Ironically, Atari was offered the U.S. manufacturing rights because Nintendo wanted access to their world-wide distribution network. Atari had previously dealt with Nintendo, regarding **Donkey Kong** and **Mario Bros.** games. Nintendo wound up going their own way and single-handedly revived the video game market with the NES. Atari tried to stage a late comeback by bringing out better 2600 games, and then went head-to-head with Nintendo with yet another new system, the 7800. Too little too late, as more systems entered the fray, the Sega Master System and later the 16-bit consoles complicated Atari's plans even further.

Atari was by now producing software for their competitor's machines. One of the titles they produced for the NES was called **Tetris**, under their home games division Tengen. Atari had failed to get a legal written contract from the game's designer and lost a legal battle with Nintendo as a result. **Tetris** was greatly responsible for the success of both the NES and the Nintendo Game Boy and Atari got nothing in return.

A company named Epyx sold a far superior portable game system to Atari which was renamed the Lynx. It had a higher price tag than the Game Boy. Little third-party support resulted in a scarcity of new games and once again, a falling out with retailers. The Sega Game Gear, which got a late start, eventually had a bigger library, and Sega, the darlings of the retail world, took whatever retail space Atari had left. Yet another competitor, NEC, produced a 16-bit portable version of their home console the Turbografx-16. The Lynx was re-designed and the price made more competitive, but valuable time had been lost and by now the Game Boy and Game Gear owned the shelves.

After awhile it became apparent that the 16-bit wars were all but over. Atari wisely stepped past the 32-bit development to leap, like a Jaguar, into 64-bit technology. Their console got their first, but once again a slow trickle of software angered Jaguar owners and many of the games they waited for did not appear to be better than 16-bit's best. No quantum leap was discernable, for sure. CD ROM games from Sega and 3DO were drawing the most attention. Except for a few outstanding titles, the Jag was not being used to its full potential. They did show they were somewhat serious by offering a CD ROM peripheral of their own. Virtual reality was promised, then abandoned.

This brings us back to the present. Now Sega has its Saturn, Sony has a Playstation, and 3DO is holding out despite its weaker specs, with an upgrade in the wings. Both Saturn and Playstation have outsold the Jaguar. Atari is losing money and market share. It looked for awhile there that Sega and Atari might join forces, but nothing has come of it. I hope Atari did not make their latest moves based on the announcement that Nintendo would be bringing out a 64-bit system in May of '96. This was a smokescreen. As of now, it will be July in Japan and September in the U.S.. Atari could have had the 64-bit world all to themselves for another six months.

I'm trying to think positive by hoping that this whole deal is just a marketing ploy to throw everybody off the scent - if it is, I sincerely hope it works.

STUFF to do this SUMMER
BLURB by Bill Schultz

Hello boys and girls! After another brief hiatus, I'm back to bring another installment of those other wacky things us video gamers might have an interest in doing if there were no videogames to play or peruse. Perish the thought!!! Seriously, I have gotten some of the excess stuff that was bogging me down, out of the way, so you should be seeing Alternate Currents in every issue of Digital Press. I would like to thank you the readers and Joe Santulli for being very patient with me. Now on to the important stuff, and there is a lot of it this time out in Alternate Currents.

Well I've finally entered the cyber-age by going on line. I was very hesitant because I am one of those people who tend to be

a bit obsessive. Needless to say I have been going to bed around 1 o'clock in the morning because surf's up. I know what you're thinking, "Hey, Jerkyboy, one in the morning isn't that late!!!" It is when you get up at three to change a wet diaper and a four thirty to go running and do back exercises. Anyway, feel free to drop me a line at

alec2@ix.netcom.com.

Let me know about some of the things you would like to see covered in Alternate Currents, let me know what you think, let me know about some of the more interesting web sites I should visit, and most importantly, let me know if you have a scoop on any entertainment, videogame, music, or media information that can be used here. You will get full credit for anything I use. See your name in print! I can't wait to hear from you gameheads out there!

Acclaim and Marvel Comics are teaming up for a true multimedia event. These two big comic companies are slammin' their premier metal men together for the first time anywhere. Acclaim's *X-O Manowar* and Marvel's own *Iron Man* will be teaming up for a comic and get this .....a videogame! The comic will be two issues, one from Acclaim, one from Marvel, both entitled *Heavy Metal*. Each issue will have player tips, hidden level info, and 3D artwork from the videogame. The videogame will be for the Playstation and Saturn platforms. I've seen the rendered graphics and they look awesome! This game can be played as X-O Manowar, Iron Man, or you can team up with a bud and go after Baron Zemo and the Cosmic Cube. Each heroes powers are unique and this game is rumored to be tough, with a capital T. Be prepared for some tired eyes and sore butts, because you will be sitting in front of the screen for a looooong time!

While on the subject of comic books, remember a few months back when I mentioned a rumor about Marvel licensing out some of their characters to Image Comics to "breathe" some life into them, another words, bring up sales and make more money. Well kids, it's a done deal. Rob Liefield and Extreme Studios will be bringing their versions of *Captain America, Thor,* and the *Avengers* to the funny pages, while Jim Lee (of *X-Men* and *Wildcats* fame) bring us the adventures of comics first family, *The Fantastic Four*, and *Iron Man* (drawn by Whilce Portacio of *X-Men* and *Wetworks*). These comics will be taking place out of Marvel Comics continuity and will be a complete revamping of the heroes we have come to know and love. Rumor has it that Erik Larsen, also of Image, will be getting a crack at *The Incredible Hulk*. This is a blatant attempt at Marvel to make some big bucks using hired guns. I'm not going to be hippocritical and say I won't buy these books but the lowdown I've heard and the artwork I've seen leads me to believe that this whole thing is going to blow up in Marvel's face. Hey guys worry more about story and art, less on the almighty dollar.

Talking about making money, what's going on with **Earthworm Jim**, another videogame, a massively popular Warner Brothers cartoon, and the most popular and innovative toy line this side of the *X-Men*. Talk about your proverbial cash cow! I hope we see more success for the videogame crossovers. It translates to more product and media coverage for us videogame junkies. Check out the **Earthworm Jim** toys if you get a chance. They are way cool!

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PATRIOTS
JOHN DONDZILA, FOR VECTREX

8.5

This is the second effort for the Vectrex from John Dondzila of Old Bridge, NJ. It's a **Missile Command** style game that has more depth to it than his earlier work **Vector Vaders**. The action is much faster and the game play is very sharp. I consider this incarnation to be superior to 2600 & 5200 **Missile Command**! Although the graphics representing the cities are minimal, the important elements like the gunsight action and the explosions are top notch. This is a fast moving challenge on par with some of the tougher Vectrex games. The title was probably inspired by the excellent performance of Patriot missiles in the Gulf War.

You have two missile launchers in this version. One on each side with a limited amount of ammo. There are smart missiles which have to be hit almost directly or they will take evasive action. There are two types of intermittent ships which move across the screen. These have to be shot down before they get a chance to launch more missiles. There are no new strategies I can offer except those that worked in **Missile Command**. Concentrate on protecting one side or one city when worse comes to worst. Go for the smart missiles and special craft first to avoid added incoming.

The packaging is much better this time. There's a color box cover and nicer instructions. This time John is using recycled Intellivision cases to hold the games. There is a nice rotating title screen, and another which has your name on it! That's right - it says "CUSTOM PRODUCED FOR [YOUR NAME]". Each cart is also serially numbered and signed by the author, thereby ensuring its collector's item future and making each cart unique.

There is also a hidden game which is mentioned in the manual. The secret game is a variation of **Breakout** and it can be found by pausing the game at exactly 150 points. The first screen of the bonus game requires that each brick be hit once to clear it. The second, twice, and beyond that I just don't know. There are no resets. One ball, one chance. Overall, **Patriots** has many unique features that make it a welcome addition to the Vectrex library. - Al Backiel

Blurb-A-Thon (continued)

I received word just the other day that ABC's totally awesome, fully rendered *ReBoot* was cancelled. It's a shame because the graphics and stories were killer and they actaully taught kids something about computers in a fun and unique way. It will be missed. The good news is, the good people at Hasbro have brought back *Transformers*, those shape changing robots from the stars, but now they are caught in the *Beast Wars*. Transformer's *Beast Wars* are not only an awesome toy line base upon the premise of animals that can transform into battling robots out to either save the world or destroy it (depends on who you're rooting for-I like the bad guys) but a fully rendered 3D cartoon. Take it from me gang, this show is awesome. The graphics are great, the story is great, and it is a little different from the norm. Check it out in syndication on Sunday mornings in your neck of the woods.

On the movie front there is a lot of action going on. From the Warner Brothers front, Val Kilmer is out and E.R.'s George Clooney is in as the Caped Crusader in the Forthcoming Bat-Flick aptly titled, *Batman and Robin*. Rounding out the cast is Michael Cough as Alfred, Chris O'Donnell as Dick Grayson/Robin, Pat Hingle as Commissioner Gordon. Rumored to be coming on board the always big time production are Arnold Swarzenegger as Mr. Freeze (I don't see it- Patrick Stewart is the man!), Uma Thurman as Poison Ivy (a lesser known member of Batman's Rouges Gallery), and Alicia Silverstone as Batgirl. Do you think that these *Batman* flicks are getting a little bit out of control? How about one villain guys, it has worked in the comics for fifty some odd years. Batman and Robin won't hit theatres until summer of '97 but this summer is shaping up to be huge in terms of must see flicks. First up we have Pamela Anderson Lee in *Barb Wire*, based on the Dark Horse Comic, it looks great in the previews - violence and sex, what more can you ask for? *Mission Impossible* starring Tom Cruise. It looks good but couldn't they have gotten Peter Graves to reprise his role as Mr. Phelps, or is he dead? It's got my curiosity piqued and my wife doesn't miss a Tom Cruise flick. *Independence Day*, the sci-fi thriller starring Will Smith, about aliens come to conquer earth... that may not happen but the toys, videogames, and ticket sales will surely dominate the summer. Also of note for passing some free time between games this summer are *The Quest* starring Jean Claude Van Damme and Roger Moore, *The Phantom* based on the comic strip of the same name, starring Billy Zane (looks real good!). Disney's animated *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, sure to get a lions share of the toy and videogame market this summer. Lastly we have *The Crow-City of Angels*, no Brandon Lee but looks interesting enough in previews. There will be no shortage of movies for you to see this summer, that's for sure. Hey it beats doing yard work if your not blowing away demons in **DOOM**.

On the Japanese front there are a couple of things you may want to keep a eye out for over the next few months. The su-

perbly animated *Ghost in the Shell* will be getting its U.S. theatrical release in May. Look for it in the big cities. *Ghost* is based on the premise that at what point are androids not really machines. Based on the same premise as *Blade Runner* but taken to the next level. Lots of violence and sex, *Ghost* is definately not for kids. Be on the look out for a *Star Blazers* live-action movie next year from the guys at Voyager Entertainment. Based on the animated voyages of the Starship Yamato, this could be hot. No casting to be annouced as of yet. Lastly, be on the look out for a Japanese Manga featuring *Spider-Man*. In your comic stores now, it shows everyones favorite wall crawler in a definite Japanese vein. It's really cool, and the characters look very much like the animation for *Speed Racer*. Hey, whatever happened to the Johnny Depp/ Nicholas Cage, *Speed Racer* flick anyway?

To slack your thirst for live music this summer you've got the HUGE Kiss reunion tour which is rumored to span two years. It all begins June 8th in Detroit, Michigan and heads into the New York Area for two shows at Madison Square Garden on July 25th and 26th. Also be on the look out for Lollapalooza '96 featuring Metallica in support of their soon-to-be released disc. It is important to note that Perry Farrell of Jane's Addiction and Porno For Pyros fame has said he will no longer be involved in the festival due to it no longer focusing on public awareness of various issues but record companies promoting mainstream rock acts i.e. Metallica and selling tickets. Needless to say, Lars and the boys are pissed. Def Leppard has a new disc coming out May 14th, to be supported by a major tour this summer. This time out it seems as though the Lepps have changed their spots, a complete departure from the bubble gum rock that made them famous, at least on the tracks I have heard. Check it out.

This brings us to the end of yet another lengthy col, but before I sign off let me ask you this. Why is it that TCI Cable subscribers in rebuilt towns can get the Sega Channel while poor schmucks, like me, who live in towns that aren't rebuilt can't check out the goods? Again, inadvertently screwed by Sega. Oh yeah, I don't want to leave without saying that Trip Hawkins is doing to 3DO what Sega did to the 32X. Hey Trip, you gonna hang us out to dry with the 3DO too? Until next time gang. Peace.

Classified Section

Digital Press Classifieds are FREE! Hook up with your fellow collectors - send us your wants and sells today!

FOR SALE: 2600 Spider-droid,sealed,box,inst: $8.00; 2600 Mogul Maniac,no end label: $8.00; 2600 Steeplechase: $7.00; 2600 Suicide Mission,Cassette,box,inst: $6.00; 2600 Racquetball: $5.00; 2600 8ridge,inst: $5.00; 2600 Revenge/8eefsteak Tomatoes: $5.00; 2600 8lueprint: $5.00; 2600 Solaris,inst: $4.00; 2600 Congo 8ongo: $4.00; 2600 Quick Step: $4.00; 2600 Dragonstomper,Cassette: $4.00; 5200 Dreadnaught Factor: $6.00; 5200 Congo 8ongo: $5.00; 7800 Super Huey,box,inst: $8.00; 7800 Double Dragon,box,inst: $8.00; CLCO War Room: $9.00; GEN NHL '95,box,inst: $15.00; I8CD 7th Guest,sealed,box,inst: $20.00; IBCD Playboy Screen Saver,Mature version,inst: $12.00; I8M Sound 8laster Pro w/Speakers,box,inst: $30.00; INTV 8lockade Runner: $7.00; INTV Nova Storm: $6.00; INTV 8eauty & the 8east,box,inst: $5.00; ODY2 Quest for the Rings,some pieces missing,box,inst: $15.00; SNES Mortal Kombat II,sealed,box,inst: $15.00; TG16 Splatterhouse,sealed,box,inst: $7.00; TG16 Silent Debuggers,inst: $5.00; TG16 Final Lap Twin,inst: $5.00; VECT Armor Attack,box,inst: $12.00. Joe Santulli, 44 Hunter Place, Pompton Lakes, NJ 07442.

2600 FANS: Send $1 for a sample issue of the 2600 Connection, the newsletter for Atari 2600 VCS fanatics. Send to: 8 Jenna Dr., Fairhaven, MA 02719-5123. email: tduarte@pictac.com, web: www.pictac.com/~tduarte.

WANTED: Ranma 1/2: Hard 8attle for SNES (Also any Ranma tapes). Contact: 8rian Clark (313)285-3815 or write to : 13201 Mercier, Southgate, MI 48195.

COME VISIT THE COLLECTOR'S CONNECTION for your Atari, Colecovision, and Intellivision needs!!! Located in Northern NJ... 236 Main St. Ridgefield Park, NJ 07660. 201-440-2898.

WANTED: ColecoVision Dukes of Hazzard with gas pedal and steering wheel. Will pay $100-$150. Write or call: George Rekk, RD#2 Rekk Road, New Kensington, PA 15068. (412) 793-0462.

FOR SALE: TG-16 games $8 each or 2 for $15: Splatterhouse, Dungeon Explorer, China Warrior, Davis Cup, Final Lap Twin, Legendary Axe, Tiger Road, Neutopia, 8omberman. Multiple copies of most titles, but list alternates. Sega CD: Dungeon Explorer, Dungeon Master II (with hint book) $20. Android Assault $15. Shining Force CD $20. Demolition Man (sealed) $20. Rebel Assault $15. Mega Race $15. Lynx: Stun Runner $10. Hard Drivin' $10. WANTED - Turbo Express (new, preferably), Wolf Team SNES games, various Lynx & Game 8oy RPG's, send SASE for list. Greg Wilcox, 244 E. 13th St (28), New York, NY 10003-5636.

VIDEO GAMES: 8uy, sell, and trade. ALL Systems. Send $1.00 for a 40 page "newsletter" or send your list of games for sale or trade to receive a free catalog. Frank M. Polosky, PO Box 9542, Pgh, PA 15223.

WANTED: Astrocade controller, Arcadia, Fairchild, Vectrex systems (I'm not paying full value, OK?) also looking for non-Atari cartridges (even commons) in quantity for a reasonable price. FOR SALE OR TRADE: ColecoVision Expansion Module #1, more. Mike, 34159 Gem Circle, N. Ridgeville, OH 44039. (216) 327-1707.

WANTED: LJN Video Art: Disney, Looney Tunes, Marvel Super Heroes: APF M1000: 8ackgammon, 8oxing, Capture, Imagination Machine, Space Destroyers, Amstrad GX-4000: all but 8urning Rubber; Coleco Quiz Whiz: 2-9, 11 and up; Starting Line-Up: NY/8oston/8altimore, San Fran/San Diego/LA; Tiger Quiz Wiz: 2, 4-13, 15-24, 26-31, 33-44, 46 and up; Tiger R-Zone: MK3, VR Troopers; Tomy Tutor: Hyperspace, Scramble; SciSys TV Chess; Entex Gameroom Tele-Pong. Russ Perry Jr, 5970 Scott Street, Omro, WI 54963. (414) 685-6187.
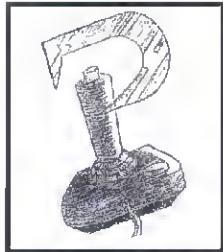
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NOTE-worthy

WEB SITE A-GO GO

There are thousands of places to find good websites these days, it's gotten to the point where you really don't have to worry about missing anything anymore, but we still have a few favorites that I'd like to point you to:

Tim Duarte's 2600 Connection is perfect for VCS addicts who can't get enough of Tim's excellent paper pub: www.pictac.com/~tduarte

John Dondzila's Home Page has info about new Vectrex games Vector Vaders and Patriots, as seen in these pages: www.crisp.net/home/pcjohn/index.html

VGR's Home Page has loads (and I mean really, a lot) of classic video game information, including their own "Guide" to classic game cartridges: www.clark.net/pub/vgr/

The FAQ Archive is the place to go to find indepth information about your favorite games, mainly contemporaries like Virtua Fighter 2 and recent RPG's: www.flex.net/users/cjayc/vgfa/index.html

Datel has it's own homepage which is a must if you're a Game Shark or Pro Action Replay owner, as codes are added weekly!: www.datel.co.uk/

The Un-official Turbo Pages are a terrific place to find information and downloadable goodies for everyone's favorite 16 bit (!) machine: www.amug.org/~bobfra/turbo.html

Blue Sky Rangers Home Page is a unique insider site from the gang that made Intellivision software for years!: www.webcom.com/~makingit/bluesky/

MTV On-line, Beavis & Butt-Head - Yes, I'm a fan. Plenty of audio and video clips to be had here: www.mtv.com/animation/beavbutt/beavvideo.html

Shareware Online is a great place to get free software: www.shareware.com/

Search.Com is where I have my browser begin. You can find anything from here, with many different seach engines all on the same page!: www.search.com/

The Temple of Kate - You knew I'd find it eventually, and it turns out there are at least a half a dozen Kate Moss websites, but this is my favorite, from a fellow admirer out there in Italia: mastrangelo.polito.it/katemoss/room0.htm

MORE KATE?

I've heard lots of really interesting opinions, from some who think Ms. Moss is the "most beautiful woman alive" (hmmm, dunno about THAT), to "an emaciated bimbo" (definitely not true... she's put on weight!). I'm just an admirer. She's no Liz Santulli, but she's definitely beyond "cute". Here's another pic!